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423 648 **Land Tenure.** The *Boruca* consider the territory in which they live as the property of the tribe at large. Legally, the Costa Rican Government has not yet made a reservation of this section. This is due, perhaps, to the relative remoteness of the area from the towns of the central plateau, and to the very broken nature of the terrain. It may also be [609] partly the result of the hostile attitude of the *Boruca* to any stranger desiring to settle amongst them. No non-Indian has property in this region.

423 311 Each family has from three to five *manzanas* for their own use, often as far as a league (3 miles) from the village. This is their "farm," and is worked continuously until the soil runs out, then a new spot is selected, and the forest cleared to start again. The village, as a whole, 423 has a *manzana* for cultivation for the church. 794 Each individual is required to do his share of [476] work on this land. The Indians go in groups to clear the field and to plant it with corn, rice, beans, and sugar cane. Formerly the church had cattle, but this situation no longer exists in Boruca. When the crops are gathered, they are stored in a special room in the parish house to be kept for the use of the priest on [735] his bi-yearly visits, or for the poor when the farming year is bad. Unfortunately, nowadays, this custom is slowly disappearing.

423 311 It is said that up to only a few years ago, the town also had its field, and that there were no individual small farms as there are today. The great number of barren hills which are commonly called "savannas," and which clearly retain the vestiges of former tilled rows (see fig. 10, *e*), serve as silent proof of the authenticity of this tradition, as well as to the Spanish reports of the great number of Indians who inhabited this region at the time of the Conquest. The savannas today are of particular importance to the *Boruca*. Economically, these savannas furnish the roof of the house (see p. 12), and the food for the few animals which these Indians possess. Besides this, they yield a grass that is considered necessary to use in the bath of the new-born child (see p. 20), and a grass which is often used to make *maracas* (see p. 29). Consequently, no one is allowed to fence off the

3:Stone E-5 (1945) 1949
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Boruca

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savannas, and the Indians complain bitterly because many of these fields are being lost to nature, who is reclaiming her own.

Property and Inheritance. The oldest male member of the family distributes the property at the death of an individual. If the male members are too young, then the oldest female member does the dividing. Concerning the property, we may judge the economy of the tribe as a whole, more or less clearly from the situation in Boruca, the largest single community of these people.

Cattle is a rich man's privilege in Boruca. Amongst the three hundred and twenty-four inhabitants, there are only one hundred cows. These are owned by sixteen individuals, no man having more than six. There are forty-seven houses in the town, however, and there is an ox for the majority of the households, at least one or more pigs, and numerous chickens. In addition to this, there are four bulls, each one with a separate owner, and twenty horses divided amongst six people. The pigs are raised to sell to the *ladinos* and to eat. The cows are seldom killed, but are used as a medium of wealth, to sell, or to pass on as an inheritance. The cows are seldom milked.

Social Organization. A few vestiges of an older communal relationship are seen in the former lack of individual farms, and today, in the *juntas* or "get-togethers" of the Indians. When a new house is to be built, the man who wants to erect it calls upon his friends for help, after he has collected the necessary material. They all join together, and the construction is ready in a short space of time, the owner giving chicha, and often food to the helpers. It is interesting to note also that on one day a year, designated now by the police chief, but formerly by the council, the men gather to cut the grass and to "clean" the village of Boruca. They go systematically from house to house, and cut all the weeds in sight. This helps to maintain Boruca as a cleared, sanitary spot.

Political Organization. Most traces of political organization have disappeared. The outstanding authority is the police agent, who is an Indian, but is appointed by the Government of Costa Rica. He is, however, de-